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On contemporary European and Polish Anthropology

It needs to be noted at the beginning of this paper that there is a multitude of terminology related to the discipline of knowledge discussed here. Thus, depending on the country, it is termed as ethnology or social (or cultural) anthropology; interestingly, folk studies or folkloristics claim to have the same roots. This terminological diversity corresponds with the historical or geographical divergences, for anthropological sciences have varied slightly across different historical periods and in different parts of the world. In each case there have been different aspects to emphasise: the social or material dimensions of human existence, visual arts or language, race, the economic system, gender, religious beliefs, folklore, etc. The variety in terminology has also resulted from the extensiveness of the discipline, whose scope has been supposed to cover, at least theoretically, the whole non-biological life of man and his culture. The practice, though, has turned out to be slightly different, having brought about the anthropological dilemmas of modern times.

The size of this paper does not permit a discussion of all the contexts which have constituted this internal diversity. One of those which needs to be considered here is the highly important context of, vaguely termed, politics, relating to the authority inter-relations within particular national communities as well as to the relations holding amongst them (also with regard to those cultures with a non-developed national identity in the European sense of the word). This is politics widely extended in time, originating in the epoch of the great geographical discoveries. That period of great significance for the history of the world influenced most deeply the anthropology of the western part of the Old Continent due to its involvement in the exploration of new lands and their natives. Reflection upon otherness within and across cultures, born as the outcome of these explorations, although shared by contemporary intellectuals and known since Herodotus, only then gained its multi-dimensional scope, having led to the development of a separate discipline of knowledge. The 16th-century proto-anthropology and the 19th-century full-fledged anthropology thus both developed from the confrontation with non-European cultural alterity. The subject matter of so historically affected a discipline of knowledge was supposed to be culture as an attribute of man, as well as the multitude of cultures, manifesting diversities within this cardinal human attribute. In practice, however, the anthropology of the colonial states focused mostly on the exotic, archaic and primitive elements of the world's cultures and on what was limited to anything non-European.

The anthropological history of the European countries which did not participate in overseas explorations evolved somewhat differently. The researchers of, particularly, Central and Eastern Europe focused on their own "savages", as native country people were viewed at the time. Uneducated, living close to nature due to their farming occupations,

cultivating queer beliefs, customs and superstitions of sometimes pagan origin, and more populous than other social groups, native countrymen took up a role akin to that of colonial primitive people. Moreover, during the time of the 19th-century freehold-granting processes, they began to stand out slightly with their folklore. This newly gained distinctiveness led to their idealisation in the eyes of romantic and post-romantic bards, philosophers and political ideologists. It was these people and their culture which, according to the romantic view, were meant to be trustees of the true national cultures – unscathed by foreign influence, authentic and persisting since pre-historic times. However, this approach did not in the least prevent the endurance of a paternalistic attitude towards these people, which regarded their "innocence" as a sign of bliss obliviousness[1]. And it was the "depraved" educated representatives of the Western World who were to discern all of this with their "learned eyes and spectacles". On every occasion they would stress the radical alterity of tribal, folk, overseas or native cultures as opposed to that of the researchers themselves – educated Europeans or Americans, such as Oskar Kolberg[2] or Lewis Henry Morgan.

The notion of alterity needs to be strongly emphasised due to the fact that the researchers of the time were interested mainly in everything which was coming from outside their own cultures, which was odd, exotic, different. This paradigm of oddity was also expressed in the first written descriptions of foreign people, conveyed by Acosta, a 16th-century geographer: "though they are not as cruel as tigers or leopards, they do not differ much from animals, they walk naked and glorify most vicious misdeeds" (Tazbir 1969: 24). Nonetheless, it should not be ignored that the reverse attitude towards alterity was also popular among contemporary researchers, inspired by Montaigne's social philosophy as well as by later philosophers – thus introducing for long into the European thinking the myth of "the noble savage", an element of the enlightenment humanism of Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

This cultural alterity, long termed as "otherness", containing a great deal of antagonistic meanings, emerged with its corresponding opposite – "sameness". Let us, then, specify that in the discussed case cultural sameness denotes a way of living followed by "us" as opposed to "others". This differentiation helps to indicate differences between nationally (ethnically) distinguished cultures, for instance, between English and Trobriandic cultures or between France and Algeria. Accordingly, sameness denotes Englishness or Frenchness, whereas otherness – Trobriandicy and Algerianity. There was also a similar differentiation within the same national culture, though here the demarcation line ran between, most generally speaking, social classes or social groups: the way of living of educated elites on one side and of uneducated ordinary people on the other. Incidentally, the nation-ethnicity opposition is not so obvious and it is sometimes neglected completely, for, as was typical of Poland, its first component was ascribed to elites (e.g. the identity-conscious "nation" of noblemen), whereas the second – to ordinary people (unconscious peasants).

The we vs. others opposition, as the very core of an objectively scoped and theoretical identity of anthropology, seems to have set the direction of its heuristic perspective, the

[1] In his works Zbigniew Libera presents evidence for a relatively clear attitude of the 19th-century Polish writers and folk culture scientists towards folk people, in which he discerns, e.g., a highlander who both "leads a poetic life" and at the same time "is vicious, idle and brutally savage". This is a carbon copy – though attested with a literary and academic seal – of the commonly viewed cultural alterity, of this attitude which is an indispensable element of group identity forming.

[2] Oskar Kolberg was a 19th- century pioneer and propagator of ethnographic research in Poland, the author of a several-volume work on folk culture on the Polish lands.

latter stemming plainly from the common-sense acknowledgment of the fact of multiculturalism. In the last decades the notion of negatively featured otherness has been more often replaced with a more neutral notion of alterity, though the starting point for the reflection on the diversified ways of people's lives, developed from a primitive ethnocentrism, remains unchanged. It is this isomorphism, of something both colloquial and scientific, of the alterity experienced daily and observed by means of scientific research tools, which is characteristic here. The practical consequence of this theoretical provision, stemming directly from everyday cultural practice, equipped researchers and amateurs with the ability of spatial differentiations ("social heights – social depths", "centre – peripheries", "town – country", "Europe – non-European world") or time differentiations ("past – present", "continuity – change", "tradition – innovation"). Successive generations of anthropologists, looking down from their lecturer podiums, described, classified, and interpreted cultures of various people, including their own natives treated as "their own others". This, however, did not mean ratifying the unsuitability of varying cultures as something uncontrollable and metaphysical, quite the opposite – there was no refraining from seeking intercultural similarities as well. And these, if they could only be specified, were mostly petrified by relevant research paradigms, from axiologically-orientated evolutionism to the scientism of structuralism.

One cannot avoid having the impression that also the identities of researchers themselves have been forged around the above drafted dichotomy. Since the publishing of Malinowski's *Journal* hardly anyone has doubted the tremendous significance of the approach – the superiority of the researcher or, conversely, his inferiority – as demonstrated by Young Poland's (modernist) peasant-fascination or other personifications of the mentioned myth of a noble savage. The latter attitude protects south-African bushmen as well as Polish peasants from the "fatal" effects of civilization, its advocates bridling at the destruction of "authentic" cultures by pop culture, claimed to be devoid of such authenticity[3]. Such mythicised thinking about primitiveness / folkness still exists, positioning it in virtually pagan times (Wet Easter Monday, Shrovetide, fortune-telling on St. Andrew's Night, folk healing practices, wedding rituals, etc.[4]), despite the change of attitude advocated over fifty years ago by Jan Stanisław Bystroń:

> "We must clearly understand that these pagan meanings are relatively rare in the present folk culture and that the research focused only on the distant past provides us with partial, skimpy results. This – rather sentimental – point of view needs to be abandoned and the folk culture should be researched as a still changing composite of meanings which derive from various sources; this variety and variability should become the focal point of our studies. Then ethnography, from being the archeological science of remains from remote, pre-historic past, will transform into a living science of constantly diverse and variable rural community" (1947:23).

[3] Some researchers overtly mock the products of pop culture, which has gathered a wider audience (also among country people), and all those participating in it (soap opera viewers, romance readers, subculture members). Apparently, such researchers assume the role of critics, looking down from their lofty "sophistication" upon anything which is "simple" and different at the same time. The impulse for this attitude came from Leavisism and the Frankfurt school, which attracted a part of culture studies perceiving the invasion of pop culture as a menace to the "authenticity" of – this time – the working class culture as well as other minorities or even individual consumers of the so-called cultural industries. This trend, though recently abated, has found its continuators in certain approaches in Polish humanistics.

[4] This can be demonstrated by the old practice of journalists asking ethnologists' opinions whenever they need to report on St. Andrew's Night or Shrovetide customs; ethnologists – thus perceived – are experts of the cultural, usually pagan, past.

All of this could have been accomplished in the middle of the previous century, when Bystroń wrote the above, or a little later. Incidentally, this research paradigm have been fulfilled especially in the Polish countryside, which, unlike the rural areas of other communist "barracks", escaped unscathed from the collectivisation designs and became a real incubator for previous practices – social, customary, economic and religious – which were successively vanishing everywhere else. Quite extensively, the Polish countryside led a life of an island keeping its own tradition and continuity. There were, at worst, adult countrymen who commuted to town to work, forming the peculiar class of peasant-factory workers, yet staying faithful to the culture of their origin. There was thus a lot to investigate, not necessarily confined to the folk forms undergoing change, due to a multitude of pagan models. Seemingly, the anthropology of that time was a monopolist in this field, although it was not allowed to trespass the "bordering" areas of sociology, religious studies or economics, which all dealt with "contemporary" phenomena.

All this resulted in the practice of building and cultivating the image of folk culture as if caught in a peculiar freeze-frame of "the end of the 19th and the beginning of 20th centuries", also taken up by other academic centres of this part of Europe. The same relates to the academic centres of former colonial western countries; however, here the practice was adopted with regard to non-European issues. Dahl and Stade, astute observers and critics of such practice, noticed that it had resulted in creating the image of "the incarnated native", "confined in and to his or her ecological niche and social cosmology, passively awaiting his or her discovery and definition by the explorer and anthropologist (…). The result is that some people run the risk of being defined not as people who *have* history, but as people who *are* history" (2000: 167). Thus the division into hot and cold societies, ratified by Lévi-Strauss, found its homological point of reference in the relation between anthropology and something beyond it.

The above legacy is still fulfilled by modern universities. The key notion to be used to render the above image is that of already mentioned alterity. Its genesis, as outlined above, has contributed to the introduction of "others" into most syllabi of anthropological studies: courses about cultures practically unknown to anthropology graduates and described very often as non-European, or courses in native folk cultures. They may be given subject-related titles, e.g. anthropology of religion or medical anthropology, rather than the anthropology of Kashmir or of the Lachy Sądeckie ethnic region[5] However, even such courses cover religious or medical practices a researcher may encounter but which are worlds apart from his daily experience. Even if the researcher is a practicing follower of one religion, for instance, Catholicism, he will certainly not focus on his own religious practices, which he follows as a member of an intellectual elite, a citizen of a western town, or as a self-aware practitioner of doctrines and traditions of faith. Rather, he will concentrate on the practices of so-called folk or minority communities outside town centres, which represent minds sometimes drastically different and resistant to theological analyses[6]. Similarly, in the case of medicine, researchers will not be interested in the medical practices they might undergo when staying at a local hospital, but rather in those known and practiced in the remote areas outside their own worlds. This does not, however, mean that religion

[5] One of the ethnographic groups of southern Poland.

[6] An interesting phenomenon within the scope of meta-ethnology (the anthropology of ethnology), publicised especially amongst western ethnologists, is the agnostic attitude or, at least, religious indifference, which is an element of the above-mentioned dichotomy of the order: centre/peripheries, modernity/primitiveness, reason/faith, etc. The world outlook of an ethnologist himself confirms the mythicised character of a dualistic paradigm constituting the subject matter of ethnology.

and medicine, viewed as cultural practices followed within the cultural range of the anthropologists themselves, cannot be the subject matters for research. They usually are, yet inside other disciplines, such as religious studies or sociology.

Characteristically, the situation described above indicates a general principle which determines the scope of anthropological exploration, focusing, regardless of topics, on the discussed peripheries or even cultural areas which are worlds apart from the daily experience of the researcher. And it is not only religion or medicine but also economics, customs, art, folklore and all other spheres of life, which will draw the researcher's interest, since they are not his own. The researcher, a white-skinned citizen from a western town, usually positions himself in the centre and what interests him are peripheries (geographical, social, economic): Brazilian tribes or local folk. Although for some time there has been a stream of research defined as *anthropology at home*, it is still placed on the margin, where – by analogy to the above mentioned "worlds-apart" areas – anthropologists try to define forms of economy, customs, art and kinships representing not as much the researcher's culture itself but that of the minorities living on its edge. *Anthropology at home*, even if not in a self-limited version, still remains a song of the future. And the ruling paradigm is invariably "anthropology outside home", actually synonymous to the notion of anthropology.

On the surface, the above and other ideological motivations – both pre-communist and post-communist ones concerning East-Central Europe – seem to be extinct. It is no coincidence, though, that in order to describe the reality of the countries which formerly composed the communist bloc, we still use the term "post-communism". This term may relate to various phenomena: dinosaurs of the heavy industry, still paralysing here and there more mobile and profitable businesses; pauperised intelligentsia who, for many years, carried the burden of educating young generations exposed to ideological oppression; the feudal structure of science and tertiary education, in which the previous uneconomical management and central state budgeting contributed to the increase of present gerontocracy[7]; ineffectuality of the civil society hindering full development of democratic authority inter-relations – that authority which, to some degree, fed itself on the earlier ideas where romantic people and peasant-lovers would merge with the people of Marxism-Leninism.

Anthropology in this part of Europe has inherited this kind of legacy – both, it seems, in its cultural and political aspects. We might use here a phrase which, though not synonymous to "pre-communist", bears the same prefix – "pre-modern times". If we are to believe the theorists and critics of the modern world, we are living now not as much in a post-communist but rather post-modern period. However, in the case of Poland, as well as of many other East-European nations, we are still living mainly under a post-communist order, for this modernity – however understood – is deficient, and even if somehow manifested, is rather of a skin-deep kind. We could follow Bystroń's proposition in some reformed formula. Yet what is, today, this "rural society", whose research he encouraged so strongly?

It should be reminded that already in Bystroń's times rural society constituted an overwhelming part of the national population, not only in Poland but in other countries as well, at least in the east and south of Europe. What, then, does the demographic landscape of modern Western Europe look like considering the model role it plays for other countries

[7] This refers, for example, to the disproportions in staff and scientific-degree statuses of university academics, manifested in the division into independent and university-dependent academics and in the phenomenon of clientelism, in which the latter stay in dependent relationships with the former.

of these parts of the world? Well, German, Swedish or British country people, to use this term, make up at best a few percent of the whole population. Moreover, as result of de-agrarisation, they usually constitute minorities within their own environments. Therefore, it may happen that in some villages of the "old" European Union there will not be even one representative of the society as understood above, and if there is, it will be a person with at least a secondary education, speaking at least one foreign language and spending the dead agrarian season in Greece or in the Canary Islands; what is more, he or she will be called a "farmer". The rest of the rural citizens will be people of minimum secondary education, performing all kinds of jobs – from the car mechanic to the lawyer.

What rational arguments are there, then, against changes in the economic and cultural landscapes of Poland and other countries of this part of Europe following the same pattern? Will their current employment in the farming industry successfully rival the few per cent of the competitors? Economy gives us a clear answer, testifying to a continuous drop in farm employees – unless, of course, the advocates of Poland or Romania as open-air ethnographic museums manage to artificially freeze the present employment structures, which will result in the strengthening of the current trend in the "new" European Union countries – solidifying the processes as if in a heat storage container or in exotic marchesof the Old Continent. Yet even this will not make Polish or Romanian country people horse-plough, perform at festivities in folk costumes and follow the tradition of carol-singing around the village. As a matter of fact, such practices are more popular in cities nowadays. The geographical and administrative criterion has slowly been rejected, which invalidates the theory that a rural community is that of Mogilany[8] near Cracow, not of Cracow itself, nor of small Wieliczka[9] with its municipal rights. And as far as the Mogilany example is concerned, does the class of country people include also the substantial number of professors of the Cracow universities living there, or perhaps only this part of the population, that is, of the farm producers, who constitute a minority and who do other jobs due to the vicinity of the old city? And conversely, does the Cracow industrial district of Nowa Huta not follow the criteria of "rurality" more fully than Mogilany? For where, in the effect of some specific historical circumstances, do the neighbourhood-relations typical of a rural culture[10] still prevail? And how about Tyniec, which looks like a village but is a Cracow district? We can always disagree saying that all these are not villages by definition; that is, they are not traditional, authentic… . Yet in following such logic we might be caught in an epistemological trap – namely, the researcher may display a valuing attitude with his likes and dislikes, pre-judgments and prejudices, consistent with the pattern of the centre-periphery differentiation. It is also true that he can always ignore such accusations and continue with his job, pointing to an "authentic" village somewhere miles away – in the Podlasie region or the Beskid Niski mountains[11]. Still, one can be trapped in the same snare – since creating spatial distance is also a manifestation of the previous, colonial and positivism-spirited dichotomy of centre-peripheries, high-low, change-continuity, sameness-otherness, etc.

Furthermore, all these "others" are becoming less and less "other". In the countryside culture, incubated in the People's communist Poland, there was a recurrent tradition of inheriting patrimonial property by one of the children, while the rest would migrate to

[8] A village near Cracow.

[9] A small town near Cracow, famous for its salt mine museum (Muzeum Żup Krakowskich)

[10] Nowa Huta is a district of Cracow, built so as to host the ironworks established in the 40s of the 20th century, inhabited mainly by migrants from rural regions and employed in the factory, as well by their descendants.

[11] The rural areas of Poland regarded as shelter of tradition or "civilisational backwardness".

town or undergo the peasant-factory worker mutation. In either case, there was no real modernisation or cultural advancement, and if such was claimed, it was nothing else but a puffed-up propaganda balloon. Accordingly, even the percentage of students of peasant origin was lower at that time than in the later years of the so much derided inter-war period! Today hardly anyone coming from the country fails university-level studies, getting at least a bachelor's degree at a state vocational college of a provincial town. They are not illiterate, pious, superstitious "others" anymore – although for many romanticism- or post-romanticism-orientated researchers they still are somewhat "unique". Where, then, should we look for these "own" others? Recent generations of anthropologists have found them in Ukraine or Belarus. Hence, more and more research is carried out in these regions of Europe, as well as in the so-called "traditionally" other non-European regions recognized by all streams of anthropological sciences[12]. However, it may turn out that, even there, this strangeness, as derived from the well-known anthropological paradigm, will not be "other" enough – Brazilian Sao Paolo, a metropolis of several million citizens, in its big-city look resembles the business centres of London or New York, after all. In contrast, the real Brazilian natives simply perish under the lethal touch of anthropology and its ideas and actions. Caged in reserves of authenticity – if lucky – they build a niche of global tourism or are carried away by the main cultural stream, losing, sooner or later, everything that made them different, or else they find a third way of adapting to the new culture.

Interestingly, the speed of cultural changes in the rural areas of Central and Eastern Europe has been several times higher in the last twenty years than during the communist period. This is inevitably going to make "living in a country-way" resemble "living the city-way", as is the case in Sweden, France or Ireland. This may also result in the development of some in-between form of living. Moreover, it is cities which seem nowadays to be trustees of local traditions, customs, values or group identity, rather than many villages or whole rural areas. The latter have undergone modernisation processes which, additionally, foster some kind of limbo state, a rejection of the old identity offering a new one instead. In this context, building a new anthropological programme under the category of country or people seems to be futile.

Nonetheless, maintaining the national-folk paradigm is still typical not only of Poland, but of all the post-communist parts of Europe. Rather a different approach is noticeable when crossing the borders of the previous iron curtain, though even there the paradigm of centre-peripheries, instructing one to study foreign "savages" rather than one's own, can be found. Perhaps that physical boundary also corresponded with the historical borderlines of diversified national awareness and levels of modernisation progress. Should we blame the stagnation of the communist era for this? This is both a provocative and rhetorical question, for not only the latest times but also earlier history – forging national identities within the Central and Eastern parts of the Old Continent – explain this division sufficiently enough. Should we, then, carry on with this stream of recent history, or rather national mythology, oblivious to the changes around us?

[12] In the first half of the previous decade I happened to hear a comment from Maurice Bloch, at the time head of the department of anthropology at the *London School of Economics*, an academic centre made famous by Malinowski. He said that the decline of communism would allow western researchers to develop – as he described it – *East-European studies.* Professor Bloch implied that these countries were still a shelter for traditional culture, at the same time as foreign to a Western European as the culture of Madagascar, where he had gained his academic experience in the 60s of the 20th century. Obviously, his remarks were made with a knowing wink, suggesting that this excluded Eastern-European university academics. Nonetheless, the attitude was not convincing, and the Professor himself treated me with tongue in cheek, not only because I was barely a doctoral student then.

A new and relatively stable anthropological paradigm has been searched for in various fields. One of the suggested areas is custom. Certain theoretical attempts have been made by Katarzyna Barańska, who has focused on ethnographic museology as an integral part of anthropology. She asserts that an ethnographic museum, for example as far as methods of collection are concerned, should gather "material tokens of customs which manifest belonging to a group treated as 'one's own'" (2004: 77). Indeed, customs can be regarded, as is done by Barańska after Znaniecki, as an extremely broad category, with peculiarities characterising a given culture or any culture. Every culture has its own customs viewed by its followers as something obvious, whereas as peculiarities or sometimes oddities by others. From the culturally-external point of view eccentric practices may be those of eating soup with a hand (seen from one viewpoint) as opposed to with chopsticks (from another); carrying loads in hands rather than on the head; going to the toilet inside a house or doing toilet outside; travelling on a donkey vs. travelling by underground. The last case was finely rendered by Umberto Eco in his pastiche of an anthropological monograph about "the Milan settlement" written by a putative anthropologist from Polynesia. Eco claimed that this means of transport, so popular in European metropolises, is an example of the so-called cult of the underground, associated with the ritual of redemption. Squeezing crowds of world dwellers underground, like sowing grains, is supposed to be a sacrifice in the effect of which stronger and healthier individuals will certainly be reborn (1994: 39)[13].

The notion of sameness, used by Barańska, is mirror-reversed otherness. This view coincides with the other one in this realm, which is presented in the present article. Nevertheless, it should be added that what is "other" for external observers, is "own" for the participants (19th-century peasants or contemporary Brazilian people). Moreover, the correlation does not function merely within the cultural and geographical dimension, but also within the cultural and historical one. A new-coming generation may deem as other the cultural meanings, practices and artifacts that have originated not only in remote or neighbouring countries but also in distant and more close-to-present yet by-gone times or in the times which are just passing. Here arises the conflict between – for instance – anthropology and history. Yet if we take a more general criterion, namely that of "otherness", we can draw a demarcation line between both disciplines of knowledge: cultural "diachronic otherness" would become the domain of history, and cultural "synchronic otherness" the discipline of anthropology. There emerges a small problem, difficult to resolve, of the gradual turning of the synchronic otherness into the diachronic one; yet, let future historians and ethnologists rack their brains over this, if the existing division into the various disciplines persists for another one hundred years or so.

The crisis which anthropology has faced since, at least, the decline of the colonial empires, ie. the time when the Eurocentric centre-peripheries opposition began to be questioned, has not been overcome yet. In each national model of anthropological studies the main research subject has been the, so-called, folk, tribal and primitive cultures – either other or local – categorised as impervious to external influences, oral, religion-permeated, socially-well-structured, etc. Such is the image of pre-modern people, which – we can get the impression – has been preserved like a mummified corpse, with researchers still driven by the romantic (or rather post-romantic) mission of tracking "authentic" practices, creations, relics or, at best, changes those peoples have undergone. The point, however, is that the primitive/folk cultures, distinguished by to the pre-modern criteria, have ceased to exist. In any case, hardly any of the special uniqueness, homogeneity, traditionalism etc., can be ascribed to their current counterparts. It is rather urban and educated communities which

[13] A summary of Eco's quotation, based on the Polish translation of his article.

are more traditional and which bridle at the invasion of pop culture having triumphed – according to research – in rural communities. On the other hand, exemplary folk traditions still exist, though dispersed across various milieux, regions or in the bosom of national cultures themselves, as manifested – from a certain perspective – by pop culture and its numerous varieties.

Thus, it is hardly possible, also in anthropology, to maintain a model which would be confined to the notion of folk culture, non-European cultures or something akin to them. Folk culture, if it ever functioned as a separate quality, has ceased to exist or is vanishing before our very eyes. In the case of non-Europeans, we encounter the Eurocentric perspective. Philosophically unsustainable, it is quashed by anthropological practices themselves, which comprise increasing globalisation and a growing number of Latin American, Asian and even African anthropologists, who will soon come to do research in Europe – ironically, the cradle of anthropology. Moreover, the notion of undefined culture seems to be unsustainable as well, for it is enquired into by cultural researchers, historians, philologists, sociologists, psychologists, pedagogists and even economists. As it seems, the solution to this aporia may be found in the very origins of anthropology – semantically, logically as well as historically.

Above all, we should turn to "ethnos", the root morpheme of one of the names of the discipline in question. If we exclude the narrower meaning discussed above – of the people as a social group whose existence as a historically and currently separate social class is highly doubtful – it will still be justifiable inasmuch as it refers to a wider sense of ethnical otherness (also of the national kind). A similar observation can be applied to the term "anthropos", to which attention to the diversity of human groups and cultures has been traditionally added in scientific research. This diversity has been, by the same tradition, transferred upon typology-driven divisions of otherness, as manifested by various ways of living: cultural gender, social class, occupation, subculture, etc. Thus, individual and cultural alterity, as the pivotal point of anthropological exploration and of the logically developed tradition of root-morphem-named science, is a key notion for determining its identity[14]. This source feature seems to be the only irrefutable characteristic of anthropological sciences – from Herodotus, describing barbarians, through Pierre Bourdieu (1988), categorising his own, academic, culture as alterity, to Włodzimierz Pessel (2008), observing street scavengers.

This source feature has also been indicated by many theorists since the beginning of anthropology, the most noteworthy opinion being that by Lévi-Strauss. Despite the scientistical aspirations of his structural anthropology, intended to discover the universal structures of the human mind, he did not hesitate to point out the fundamental fact of cultural differentiation, and of anthropology rooted in it. According to him, the major research focus of ethnology, more often termed as anthropology, is man. Yet this science differs from other sciences of man in that it strives to grasp its subject in a variety of aspects. He claimed that noticing and distinguishing of differences and highlighting of particulars are the main aims of ethnology (1993: 55)[15]. More or less at the same time, a similar view was expressed by Clifford Geertz, who in many respects may be regarded as the adversary of the pope of

[14] The notion of ethnonim, a derivative of ethnos, indicates a deep-rooted awareness of cultural alterity amongst the representatives of particular groups of people, particular "peoples". This can refer to the subculture group of hip-hop, distinguishing itself – with the help of various cultural centres – from the subculture of heavy-metal representatives, as well as to Polish people aware of their differences from the Germans, or to the inhabitants of Cracow as distinct from the Highlanders.

[15] A summary of Lévi-Strauss's quotation, based on the Polish translation of his book.

structuralism: "If we wish to find out what being human is, we can accomplish it only by observing what man really is: and this is people who, first of all, are diversity"[16] (2005: 71). Therefore, turning to the very core of the anthropology model allows us to assert that anthropology, in its original form, is a sort of reflection upon cultural alterity. Paradoxically, alterity thus viewed may refer to the alterity of the researcher himself and to the culture represented by him, as remarked by Kirsten Hastrup, stating that today we can put a stigma of otherness on ourselves (2008:19)[17]. Preserving this solid core of disciplined self-awareness and identity, if only it does not take the over-mythicised form of thinking about folkness or primitiveness, seems to be a sufficient guarantee for saving the otherness of one's own anthropology from the multitude of reflections upon culture. It may prevent anthropological sciences from falling into cultural studies, cultural sociology or cultural psychology.

It is especially the first of the above-mentioned disciplines which has been revealing "colonisational" anthropological aspirations. In consequence, such strong "tectonic movements" emerged upon the meeting of anthropology and cultural studies that the academic debate which took place at Manchester University in 1996 was titled *Cultural Studies will be the death of Anthropology.* The statements which were made there should, at the very least, serve as warning signs for anthropology: that it will be absorbed by cultural studies, that it had its day, that it has had already fulfilled its mission, and that its cognitive properties have been depleted (Morley 1998: 483). Paul Willis himself asserted that: *Anthropology is dead. Long live TIES (theoretically informed ethnographic study*) (Morley 1998: 483). Does that mean that the smaller fish is going to eat the bigger one? If we agree that anthropology is still functioning in its ossified and traditional form, then the reverse may turn out: that it is cultural studies which are the bigger fish. And it is not an overstatement to say that the course followed by ethnographically-orientated cultural studies may serve as a model for anthropologists themselves, who have plunged into the depths of various forms of reinterpretation, criticism, without extending enough the scope of empirical research. The same pertains to the method – different forms of reading or writing culture are taken up and devoted solely to epistemological or general methodological issues, not going beyond the very basic heuristics of the discipline. The latter, in contrast, is often transcended by representatives of cultural studies, who – we can colloquially say – do not only do their own but others' job as well, seeing that anthropology by its own negligence deprives itself of topics and methods.

Looking from this perspective, we can assume that cultural studies have initiated, and are in the process of, colonising anthropology, setting the danger of closing the latter in some kind of ghetto, where it will see its last days with its traditional focus on traditionally understood folk and tribal cultures. This danger is most transparent when looking at the issues taken up by cultural studies: races and nations, post-colonialism, different minorities (ethnic, religious, gender, occupational), sub-culturalism, comparative issues, urban anthropology, political anthropology. It all started with the publication of Hoggart's work, fifty years ago, on the culture of the working class. That work largely resembles classic anthropological monographs, meticulously describing various exotic communities – while such exotics may also be ascribed to the British working class of the middle of the 20th century. This testifies to the populism of cultural studies, displaying a keen interest in contemporary peoples and their daily ways of living in various aspects (cf. Gittlin 1997).

In cultural studies alterity is not sought within the division into centre/peripheries, which is political and depreciated. Rather, theoretical equality of the importance of all the

[16] Translation of the Polish version.

[17] A summary based on the Polish translation.

cultures, classified by ethnic and typological criteria, is shown. The changing cultural landscape is too meagerly noticed by anthropology. This shortcoming basically concerns the strong Eurocentric, or even nation-centric, approaches, in which foreign cultures are reduced to notions within the cultural circle in which the researcher resides. In this obsolete attitude, cultural alterity was even despised or, conversely, glorified, romanticised, exoticised, even souvenir-treated, or all of the above. Naturally, when considering the canons of scientific studies, each of those approaches contradicts the very essence of science. Thus, in order to reach the comparative neutrality of non-commitment we should turn to the notion which will displace these centricisms. Namely, it would be good to agree that anthropology is not an ordinary but cosmopolitan reflection upon cultural alterity (cf. Rabinow 1999: 118). Additionally, this cosmopolitanism, overloaded with colloquial meanings, should be categorised with regard to relativism, typical of anthropology, as well as to anti-essentialism and anti-elitarianism. Only within such a comparative perspective will anthropology be able to review its scope and method, find its own place on the interdisciplinary market of the areas of knowledge competing to bear the palm of culture research.

The sooner we realise the fact of the growing cultural and historical changes, at the same time turning to the historical and heuristic sources of the discipline's identity, the shorter this prolonging identity crisis will last which schizophrenia-tainted anthropology has been undergoing. On the one hand, the discipline of folk culture, some kind of rural or tribal culture, with its separate sections formed within national culture, has practically ceased to exist. The time of their relatively definite presence finished with the disappearance of the conducive political, social and economic circumstances, the string of which maintained their distinct qualities. We have witnessed how they have become merely historical phenomena. Yet, secondary phenomena have not vanished, for example, from the indigenisation rules, thus contributing to the formation of a new form of ethnos, not hermetic and homogenising, but of an open and heterogenising type. On the other hand, what has remained of the primitive ethnoses still exists, dispersed within national or supranational structures, the latter often ideologised and absorbed by pop culture, like, for example, the idea of Scottishnesss, unintentionally popularised in Mel Gibson's film. These and other phenomena continually increase, especially on the Old Continent, which for many well-known reasons has been undergoing the process of not only intensive development and complication of the multinational European culture, but of forging of a multicultural European nation as well.

What, then, should the mission of anthropology be, particularly on the Old Continent? Anthropology should operate in the realm of the aforementioned cultural alterity, as more or less demonstrated by the successive generations of researchers. Today, this paradigm needs to be enriched with a new quality: otherness unrestrained by descriptive adjectives such as "folk" or "tribal". That older paradigm, in actual practice, was limited to a geographical criterion or geographical region. Cultural alterity, however, appears amongst not only cultures of particular classes, but also amongst ethnic, regional, national, denominational, occupational, age and community groups, and these alterities are parts of hobbies and pastimes, contributing to the development of specific subcultures or neo-tribes. What is more, the heuristic criterion, as derived from the centre-peripheries division, with its centre represented by the researcher and the peripheries, ie. the researched, has expired too. Within this past division there was a peculiar kind of interaction in which the former recited his monologue following the otherness-diminishing theory, whereas the latter stayed mute. In the face of the pluralising and heterogenising world, dialogue – as a reaction to former colonisational ambitions of anthropology – is an non-ignorable fact.

This dialogic aspect needs to be stressed also due to the obvious existence of various types of modern philosophy of anthropology, not only within its theory or method, but also with respect to historical and political criteria. The point is that reflection upon cultural al-

terity is always carried out – despite cosmopolitanism advocating good intentions – from a native's point of view. Thus we have Polish, British and Brazilian anthropologies, each viewing and understanding differently the culture of Mbuti Pygmys or of the Cracow-inhabitants, or other national, community, gender cultures of researchers themselves, each representing these anthropologies; in this context we can even talk about native anthropologies. The whole anthropological discipline is a kind of anthropological heteroglossia, polyphony of statements upon culture as an attribute of man, and upon particular ethnic or typological embodiments, yet statements invariably made in some local context.

Does all this mean revisiting the anthropological proposition formulated by Malinowski, a long time ago yet not yet outdated, of presenting the so-called native's point of view? At any rate, his and other similar approaches would allow us to get rid of the nativist flaw, revealed in the anthropological practice of particularly Central and Eastern Europe. It would certainly facilitate the pluralisation of anthropological discourse, which has always tended to look down with its imperial and homogenising view from above the "heights" of Western cultures. The need for such an approach, especially now, in post-colonial times, and recently, in the post-communist era, cannot be overestimated. If followed, this new perspective might reveal some new capacity of the things which link various cultures – despite their alterities. After all, it is everywhere that people establish families, raise children, believe in various things, have their own languages to communicate, have their own customs, values, superstitions, phobias, convictions…, and bury the dead believing in other worlds. Briefly speaking, the so-called psychic unity of mankind, formerly indicated, becomes a necessary condition for a cross-cultural translation, carried out, at different abstract levels, by both the anthropologist and the "ordinary man". The discussed cultural alterity, the reflection on which constitutes the identity of anthropology, cannot obscure the fact of the existing mutual areas of cultural worlds, universalities, which still need to be identified.

Gustavo Riberio from Brazil, representing non-Euro-American anthropology, elaborates on the above cosmopolitan anthropological discourse stating that, historically, it has always been political in character and that it will remain such in the future (2006: 365). The main political player has been the West, and this fact can still be noticed in anthropologists' works. The colonisational trends ought to be overcome, and this prospect becomes more significant due to the blurring of the boundaries among cultural worlds, the blending and diffusion of the latter, acculturation processes, the rapid growth of various cultural syncretisms. This new quality was observed a decade ago by unrivaled determined to prove that in moral history, be nothing else but morality, we had reached the point which obliged us to change our thinking about diversity. He claimed that as long as, substantially different, approaches to life, instead of being pigeonholed and closed in clearly contoured social spaces, really underwent blending on poorly defined areas, social spaces of undrafted, irregular and undefinable contours. The question of how to deal with this real puzzle of valuation, which is the effect of these incommensurabilities, will focus our attention onto an entirely different aspect. Comparing landscapes and still lives is one thing, comparing panoramas and collages, a completely different matter (2003: 110)[18].

Sadly, Geertz died before *world anthropologies* fully developed their approach based on the conviction about the necessity to change the research paradigm. This approach means not only replacing still lives with collages, shifting the epistemological centre of gravity from the model onto empiricism itself, from monologue onto dialogue, from essentialism onto anti-essentialism. For, this contradictory – from the viewpoint of classic methodology – operation results in shifting within the anthropological politics – from multiculturalism

[18] A summary based on the Polish translation.

onto interculturalism. The first approach, represented by the conception of cultural relativism, often contributes to the increase of cultural segregation, though with the noble intention of respecting alterity. The second approach suggests exchanging and transferring – even at the cost of conflict, resolvable though when the rules of dialogue are followed. This does not, however, mean solely pluralising authority or knowledge as an end in itself but rather as a step towards "post-identity politics" – as described by James Clifford – which might put a stop to those, mentioned at the beginning, two traditions of performing anthropology: imperial and national (cf. Riberio, Escobar 2006: 5). The aim of global anthropologies is to create a polycentric canon, akin to polycentric multiculturalism, a new reflection upon relations among anthropological communities, as Riberio asserts (2006:364). This means creating a kind of forum to let particular national anthropologies meet, "enabling [it] to turn into a dialogue" (Barańska 2004: 286) instead of presenting "monologues".

Dialogue sensitivity, of the kind shown above, is not a coincidence. For not coincidentally, and in a slightly broader theoretical perspective, this dialogical and hermeneutical feature of the researcher's tolerant attitude – in the spirit of Heidegger and Gadamer – were already emphasised by Joanna Tokarska-Bakir (1992) and Katarzyna Kaniowska (1999). The latter expressed the experience of reconstructing cultural alterity as follows: "In order to make this experience occur we need openness, though not meaning resignation of one's own views, complete liberation from pre-judgments or full identification with the others and different, but rather readiness for a discussion, a dialogue" (1999:34). The tolerant methodology of humanistics, although resigning then, in these and other cases, from achieving complete and assured knowledge, becomes an unrealistic conception, yet it offers something different – self-knowledge of anyone posing questions. This may be accomplished if only we give up searching for some universal, modernistic, detached analytical perspective which, particularly when researching cultural alterity, is both unattainable and pointless. In contrast, commitment makes us involve part of our personality (cognitive, social, emotional) in encountering cultural alterity, inevitably triggering off an element of introspection and leaving some trace in our consciousness.

In conclusion, we should acknowledge the fact that the alterity of folk or rural culture, and any cultural "primitiveness", understood evolutionally and positivistically or romantically or neo-romantically, or finally scietistically, as incubated for a few decades in Poland and in other countries of this part of Europe because of post-war history and the ruling ideology, is now… history. Divisions of anthropologically viewed alterity run along entirely different areas, as advocated a hundred and even several years ago, perhaps justifiably, by theorists of nations, classes, races or religions. However, this does not in the least mean that anthropological reflection should abandon the above criteria, but rather that they they need to be rethought, involving modern theories of globalisation and glocalisation, nation and regionalisation, society and individuals, representation and reception. Neither does this mean abandoning the cardinal scope criterion, constituting the identity of anthropology – seeking not only cultural diversity, purposefully emphasised in this paper, but universalism as well. It is justifiable to state that in the present time of political changes occurring within the realm of the pluralised, hybridised and syncretised European cultures, the role of these criteria seems to be positively reviving.

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